

T H E

ABSOLUTE AND INDISPENSIBLE  
DUTY OF CHRISTIANS,

I N

THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE,

CONSIDERED AND ENFORCED,

I N A N

AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS.

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BY W. M A S O N.

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ARM YOURSELVES, 1 Pet. iv. 7.

IT IS HIGH TIME, Rom. xiii. 11.

QUIT YOURSELVES LIKE MEN, 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

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J. H. T.

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DUTY OF CHRISTIANS

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**M**<sup>Y</sup> having used the phrase, *passive obedience, and non-resistance*, page 15, line 16, of this address, has raised a great outcry against me. But let it be only attended to with candour, that it is added, *to God's holy word, and to all his sacred commands*, and surely it is sufficient to stop every christian's mouth, to silence every objection, to prevent the least misunderstanding, and to supercede any mis-representation of my meaning in that, or any other part of this address.

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T H E  
ABSOLUTE AND INDISPENSIBLE

DUTY of CHRISTIANS, &c.

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BRETHREN and FELLOW-CHRISTIANS,

I. **S**O I would call and love ALL, and every one, without the least regard to name, sect or party, who believe the sacred truths of the bible, hope in the precious promises of God in Christ, and obey his holy commands in love. This faith, hope, love and obedience, constitute the true Christian. If either of these be wanting, the Christian character is defective. The Christian dares no more to cavil against, and wilfully disobey any one command of God; than he dares to call in question, any of the sacred truths of God.



For faith binds, hope confirms, and love constrains to universal obedience to God's laws. Therefore, the Christian esteems his bible as the warrant for his faith, the ground of his hope, and the rule of his conduct. And, there is no one station of life, but the word of God commands how we should act in it : no one circumstance in life, but it directs how we should behave under it. Therefore, obedience to the revealed will of God, and a concern for his glory, is, and ever will be esteemed by all true Christians, the primary and chief object of their attention and regard.

2. To such, I would humbly address some few words, respecting their conduct in the present day, when the voice of the multitude is heard on high, crying out for LIBERTY. Upon you, O Christians, would I call in scripture language, **ARM YOURSELVES—IT IS HIGH TIME—QUIT YOURSELVES LIKE MEN.**

*Arm yourselves*, in your own defence, with the word of truth and righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, so as not to sin against your  
God.



God. Arm yourselves, with the same mind which that word requires of you, and expects from you, so as to obey and please God. *It is high time*, when the voice of licentiousness is heard, and a liberty to violate the precepts of your God abounds, for you to be zealous for his glory, and to beware, lest you follow the multitude to do evil. *Quit yourselves like men*, who fear God, and act under the influence of his holy commands.

3. Would you exercise yourselves, to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and man, respecting your conduct in the present day? beware of your spirit and temper. See that both be under the rule and direction of God's word. It is at our peril to disobey the plain, positive, and express commands of our God. The bible is our best rule in *politics*. No other scheme of *politics* shall I presume to meddle with, or recommend. That teaches, that requires us to be *religious politicians*, so as at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, from obedient hearts to our God, with loyalty and affection to his Majesty, to

shout with united voices, GOD SAVE THE KING !  
This is the spirit and temper which the bible in-  
spires.

4. Consider, our love of, and loyalty to our King, arises from the consideration that God hath set him over us. Love and loyalty to him, are not imposed on us by the authority of fallible men only, but chiefly, from the positive commands of our Almighty God. Therefore, love and loyalty to the King, is our absolute and indispenfible duty. And, a spirit and temper contrary to this, is not only inconsistent with the faith of a Christian, but also, a violation of the exprefs commands of our God. Had I not seen and heard, with deep concern, and heart felt sorrow, such a spirit and temper exalted in those whom I love, and from whom I hoped better things, I should have been silent on this subject, and not have troubled you with this ADDRESS. But, seeing things are so, is there not a cause? bear with me in love, I beseech you. Be not offended with me, I pray you. I would willingly offend no one. I desire to follow peace with all men. But, duty to my God, allegiance to my King, and a real concern for your good, unitedly  
con-

constrain me thus to address, and earnestly entreat you, calmly to consider what is required of us, what is expected from us, as our duty, both in respect to our God, and our KING. I am inclined to think, and willing to hope, that the failing of Christians herein, arises from want of due consideration, and close attention to the express commands of God in his holy word. For, we are most solemnly enjoined,

To honour the King.

To pray for the King.

To be subject to the King.

5. Let us, therefore, my fellow-christians, as in the presence of God, before whom we must shortly appear, and to whom we must all account, Consider these points.

1<sup>st</sup>. HONOUR THE KING, 1 Pet. ii. 17. As this command stands closely connected with another, FEAR GOD, does it not therefore instantly strike our minds with this idea? if we fear God, we shall honour the King: If the King is not honoured of us, God is not feared by us. There is a close and inseparable



connexion between these commands. Both are enforced under the sanction of the same authority, the word of God. If we are influenced by the former, we shall obey the latter. What God hath joined together, let no man dare to put asunder.

6. But, who was King, when this command was given to the primitive Christians, to honour him? Even NERO, that wicked tyrant, that cruel persecutor, that inveterate enemy to Christians. What! honour such a wretch! Did you ever hear, or read of such an objection, from the mouth of any one of the primitive Christians? Can you produce one single instance, of any one of the apostles, or first Christians, speaking evil of dignities, or refusing to honour them, however cruelly they were treated by them? Nay, was it not their constant doctrine and practice, Render honour to whom honour is due? Rom. xiii. 7. Therefore, this command to honour such a King as Nero was, is a blow at the heart, a stab to the vitals, a death-wound to every objection against obeying this command, "Honour the King."

7 But

7. But, be the King what he may, our duty to God is the same. Think of him as you please, yet, this dissolves not your obligation to obey God's command. God has not sent an angel to reign over us, but a man of like passions with ourselves. I love and honour the King for his princely virtues and amiable qualities. It is neither your duty nor mine to think, speak, or hear of any faults he may be accused, lest we get disaffected to him. Let us look at home, mend our own, and we shall be much better employed. For, it is adding to the number of our sins, to disobey God, by not honouring the King. Let us, therefore, do our duty, obey God's command, honour our King, and so shall we please our God. Let us think well, and speak well of him, as one whom God has chosen, exalted, and set over us. For, he says, "By ME kings reign." *Proy. viii. 15.* Consider that word.

8. When the apostle exhorts, "Children obey your parents," he adds, *in the Lord.* Ephes. vi. 1. As it is the mind and will of the Lord, the command of the Lord, well pleasing in his sight, and makes for his glory, therefore should be done for

his sake. So let us honour the King, *in the Lord*. Obey our Lord, by honouring the King, as it is his mind and will, is his command, is well pleasing in his sight, is to his glory, and should be done, for the Lord's sake. So Peter exhorts, "Submit to the King for the *Lord's sake*." 1 Pet. ii. 13. This is to honour the King in faith, as believing him to be set over us, *in the Lord*. And as this faith works by love, it will lead us, to honour the King, in love.

9. Love, covers the multitude of faults. Love thinketh no evil, speaketh no evil, heareth no evil against the King. Love puts the best constructions upon the behaviour, hides faults with its vail, and casts a mantle of kindness over failings. Like the painter (I think Apelles) who drew the picture of Alexander, with his finger upon the scar on his face: so love has a finger to hide scars and blemishes, and cover failings and infirmities. Does the Lord command us, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself? What love then is due from us to our King? even such love, as will so carry out our affections towards him, that we shall think no



ill, speak no ill, hear no ill against him, and, totally disregard all disloyal reports concerning him. Love will restrain us from doing any thing to grieve his royal heart, or cause the crown to sit heavy on his sacred head. Yea, love will make us active, in doing every thing in our power to honour the King, consistent with the duty we owe him, the allegiance we are bound in to him, and the honour we are commanded by our God to give him. Vain and specious only, are all professions of love, honour and reverence to the King, while we entertain groundless suspicions of him, and pursue such steps, as tend to disturb his peace, or perplex his government. But, the enquiry of an obedient heart to our God, and of a loving, loyal heart to our King, will be, what shall be done to the man, whom the KING OF KINGS delighteth to honour? our duty, as Christians binds us, our love, as Christians constrains us, thus to honour our King. And, therefore, of you, my brethren and fellow-christians, may I not in the apostle's words demand? shew me your faith by your works. Make it manifest, that you do believe in God, by your

obedience to this, his sacred command, **HONOUR THE KING.** If you do, you will,

10. Secondly, Pray for the King. We are solemnly enjoined, by God's sacred word, to pray for Kings, and for all who are in authority. 1 Tim. ii. 2. This, I am positively sure of, were there more praying for the King, there would be less evil speaking against the King: and were there more faith in God's word, there would be more obedience to his will and command, in more cordially honouring, and heartily praying for the King. In doing this, we not only obey God's word, but we honour **THE KING OF KINGS**, by carrying our King's cause, presenting his person and interest, and the concerns of his kingdom, at the throne of God's grace, referring all these matters to him, seeking every blessing and direction from him, and leaving all events with him. O, this praying for the King, would not only expel the rancorous seeds of rebellion, which are so rise in our corrupt natures; but would also, most heartily conciliate our affections to the King, and heighten our esteem of him.

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There is a mighty power in prayer, to charm away all evil thoughts of the person we pray for, and to beget love to him, and esteem of him. All who try the experiment, prove the truth of the doctrine. Do not you neglect it.

11. But, adds the apostle, as a cogent reason for this duty, — “That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. For, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” 1 Tim. ii. 2. 3. I am not addressing those, who live in the total neglect of prayer. It is not to be expected, that those who do not pray for themselves, will either pray for the king, or any one else. From such, I expect nothing but the contemptuous sneer, and the indignant frown, for all I have said upon the christian’s duty. This I can bear. Such I can pity. Because, they see not their own mercies, but slight and despise God’s sacred truths, and solemn commands. Yet, even such I should be sorry, designedly to offend. But, it is you, my fellow christians, to whom I appeal: You, who love and delight to do that which is good, and acceptable in the sight of God

our



our Saviour, and desire to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. You, cannot but see, how closely connected your duty of praying for the king, and for all in authority is, with the enjoyment of these great blessings, and precious mercies, quietness, peace, godliness, and honesty. Whence, those tumults, discords, distractions, disaffection to government, ungodliness and dishonesty, which are so displeasing to God our Saviour? do they not subsist, and will they not increase among us, while the duty of praying for the king, and for all in authority, is neglected by us? But, the man of prayer, will pray them away from his heart, and will live them down in his life. For all such, will,

12. Thirdly, Submit to the king. For, we are commanded, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." Rom. xiii. 1. Here is a positive, and comprehensive precept. No one can plead exemption from it. It is enforced with the most powerful reason, why every one should obey it.—"For, "there is no power, but of God. The powers "that be, are ordained of God." And, this precept

cept is backed, with a most severe threatening.—  
 “Whoſoever, therefore, reſiſteth the power, re-  
 ſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they who reſiſt,  
 ſhall receive to themſelves DAMNATION.” Pray,  
 now, do not riſe in anger, rebel in wrath, and  
 cry out in fury, “I cannot bear this; away with  
 it: this is the obſolete, long ſince exploded  
 doctrine, of *paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance*, which  
 neither we, nor our forefathers could bear!” Bap-  
 tiſe it by what hard name you pleaſe: call it,  
*ſcandalum magnatum* if you will; Still, this will not  
 deſtroy its divine authority, diſſolve your obligati-  
 on to obey it, nor, reverſe the awful ſentence of  
 wrath, denounced againſt thoſe who diſobey it.

13. As to paſſive obedience, and non-reſiſt-  
 ance, as a mere human doctrine, taught and con-  
 tended for by any man, I know nothing about it.  
 I never read one page of human compoſition for, or  
 againſt it, nor do I think, ever ſhall. But, if  
 you pleaſe, this divine precept, ſhall paſs under  
 your title, *paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance*. Is  
 there any thing ſo very formidable, ſo very dread-  
 ful to a chriſtian’s ear, or a chriſtian’s heart, to be  
 paſſively

passively obedient to God's holy word, to be non-resistant to all his sacred commands? Why, then, this tragical outcry, against submission to the king, subjection to the higher powers? Sure I am, it carries this sanction, from the mouths and pens of all God's holy prophets and apostles, so WE TAUGHT. It bears this impress, from the tongues of all primitive christians, AND SO WE BELIEVED. And, it is enjoined us, by the most powerful, most endearing, and most engaging motive—"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, whether it be to the King as Supreme: Or unto governors which are sent by him, for—THE LORD'S SAKE." 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

14. *For the Lord's sake.* Christians, how do your hearts feel, at the urging this plea, and advancing this motive, for your submission to the King, and subjection to the higher powers? can you resist it? dare you reject it? where then is your faith in, and love to your Lord? You are called to a duty; which however irksome to flesh and blood, however contrary to human pride and carnal reasonings, however opposed by men of

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corrupt minds, who know not God, and reject his revealed word; yet, to YOU, it comes enforced with this most solemn, this most prevailing reason, for, THE LORD'S SAKE: As though the apostle had said, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you believe in as your Saviour, who taught you to render unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's, for the honour of the profession you make of him, by the obedience you owe to him, for the sake of the glory you are bound to give him, for the hope you have in him, the expectation you have from him, and, as you will answer it at the last day, when you shall be judged by him, act agreeable to your character, as bearing his name, and be obedient to his laws, by submitting yourselves unto the King for his sake, and being subject unto the higher powers, for the honour and glory of him.

15. Surely, you will not evade the force of this, and object and say, as a deep sighted politician, and self-denying christian, once did, when I was urging this doctrine: "True, the first christians, were in an infantile state, few in number,  
and

and weak in power, therefore, for them to be thus subject, and submit themselves, was wise and politic; but, now the case is altered: As we have power and strength sufficient to right ourselves, we ought to use them in our own cause." I admire his cunning, while I marvel, how any who profess to be Christians, and to believe the bible, can reason thus. A small interpolation, would just adapt this ancient scripture, to his modern taste: for, when Paul says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," it is only to add, until they have sufficient power to resist them, and cast off submission to them. But, is not this to trifle with the solemn, invariable commands of a holy, jealous, sin-avenging God? Who that fears God, would dare act thus, by the 5th commandment, and cast off all duty to his parents, because, he is of years to help himself?

16. But, the apostle adds, "Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." Rom. xiii. 6. That adage, "conscience makes cowards of us all," in some sort holds good in respect to the Christian's conduct:

Con-

Conscience makes the Christian a coward in any service, which is contrary to the will and commands of his God. But, a good conscience towards God, inspires him with the truest courage, the greatest fortitude, and the boldest magnanimity in his service. Therefore, the Christian cannot, dare not commence a traitor to his King, and a rebel against his government; for he knows he would thereby subject himself to the wrath of the higher powers, and expose himself to the punishment of the wholesome and penal laws enacted against such conduct. But, besides this fear of wrath, he has a higher and more noble principle, from which he acts, in submitting to his King, and being subject to the higher powers, even for conscience sake: conscience towards God. To honour and obey the King, to pray for him, to submit to him, and to be subject to the higher powers under him, all this to the Christian is a conscientious matter. Therefore, he must *needs be* subject. The peace of his conscience is at stake. To act contrary to God's will, would not only deprive him of God's peace in his conscience, but bring the sense of guilt, the fear of wrath, and the terror of condemnation upon him.



him. See then, the close connection there is, between obeying the will of God, in submitting to the King, and enjoying peace of conscience from God.

17. Now, here we see what is true patriotism, Bible, Christian patriotism. A true patriot fears God, and is obedient to his commands: He honours the King, prays for the King, and submits to the King, not only for fear of wrath, but also for conscience sake; conscience towards God. Because, this is the command and will of God. All such are true patriots, real lovers of their country, and all such are worthy of reverence and honour. But, all patriotism without this, is mere farce and specious pretence: Bombast, great swelling words of vanity, by which they allure, says St. Peter. 2 Pet. ii. 18. Such patriotism is begun without principle, is carried on without the fear of God, and will end in shame and confusion. To talk of such being true patriots, real lovers of their country, who do not fear God and honour the King, but are men of immoral principles, and open enemies to God, by wicked works, reminds us, of Satan transforming himself into an angel of light.

18. As

18. As our Bible gives us the character of true patriots, real lovers of their country, so it also lays down a full description of mock, and pretended ones, that we may beware of them, be armed against them, and not be beguiled by them. Says St. Peter, "They walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness," and *despise government*, presumptuous are they, and *self-willed*. They are not afraid to *speak evil of dignities*.—While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. 2 Pet. 10.—19. With this St. Jude agrees. He scruples not to call them, filthy dreamers, who defile the flesh, *despise dominion*, and *speak evil of dignities*. Jude 8. Fine patriots! Fine lovers of their country are such! Should such persons stand forth, assume the name of patriots, and, with the foul breath of slander, strive to incense and inflame the minds of his Majesty's subjects against him, it is high time to be on our guard: To arm ourselves with the word of God against their nefarious designs; and to quit ourselves like men, like Christians, who fear God, and honour the King. It is our wisdom not to be beguiled by them. It is our duty to beware of them, lest we catch the infectious,

fectious, the wide spreading poison from them, of *despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities.* For, this is equally as contrary to the word of God, as greatly displeasing to God, and, as highly unbecoming us as Christians, as any of the other sins enumerated. But,

19. Talk they of liberty! O, ye sons of liberty, ye warm contenders for freedom, I join hand and heart with you, carry your cause as high as you will, and extend it as far as you please, only, let it be bounded by this sacred barrier, the law of God, and a good conscience. Beyond this, what Christian dare go? for, all beyond this, is not Christian liberty, but lawless licentiousness: from which, we ought most heartily to pray, Good Lord, deliver us! And, may he “give us  
“grace to obey the King chearfully and willingly,  
“for conscience sake; that, neither our sinful passions, nor our private interests may disappoint  
“his cares for the public good. May he possess  
“the hearts of his people, that they may never be  
“wanting in honour to his person, and dutiful  
“submission to his authority.” And, seeing the



commands of, Fear God, Honour the King, are so closely joined, and so inseparably connected, therefore, while with a holy fear of God, and with exultation of heart in him, we shout with the people of old, "THE LORD HE IS THE GOD. THE LORD HE IS THE GOD!" May we add with the same breath, in loyalty and affection, GOD SAVE THE KING! GOD SAVE THE KING! and let all the people say, AMEN.

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## P O S T S C R I P T.

**T**HE present prospect of our affairs, is truly melancholy, affecting and alarming. Does not this, call loudly upon us, to obey this command of God? "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you," Eph. iv. 31, 32. Ah, my brethren! sure I am, this would be more pleasing to our God and Saviour, than all that unchristian, party strife, and fiery contention about politics, which so unhappily prevails among us. Surely, instead of imputing our troubles to this, and the other cause, it rather behoves us to consider our sins, mourn over our sins, humble ourselves under the

the mighty hand of God for our sins, and forsake our sins, which are so highly provoking to God, for which he hath a controversy with us, and which are the real ground of our national calamities, and the true cause of all our present distresses. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city,—hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9.

It is devoutly to be wished, that a day may be set apart by authority, for a general fast; in which, we might unitedly humble ourselves before God, turn to him, and seek him with our whole hearts, confess and bewail our sins in his sight, cry mightily unto him to avert impending, deserved judgments from us; direct to some speedy method of abolishing the present unhappy differences between us and our colonies, so as to prevent the farther effusion of blood, the dire ravages of war, and conciliate, not only, all matters in dispute between us, but also, our hearty affection to each other. O how earnestly is this to be coveted! Is any thing too hard for the Lord? No; therefore in the faith of this, we ought constantly, and fervently to pray for the accomplishment of this happy event. "For, who knoweth, if the Lord will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" Joel ii. 14.

F A S T I N I S.